School of Vedanta

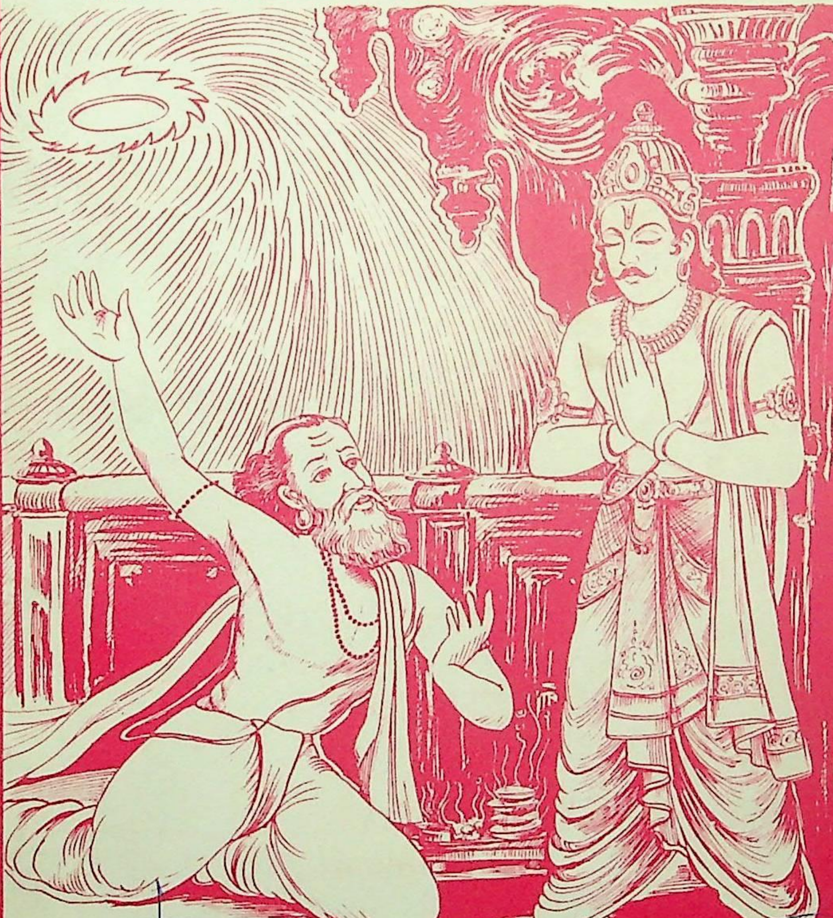
Feb 98

Ravi Sastrms

Alike in honour and insult – saint

Happy
25 Mar 98

The KALYANA-KALPATARU



Secularism = no secularism in [illegible]

Man is only a tool
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Jnana is when mind rejects objects

Mind control is from free will

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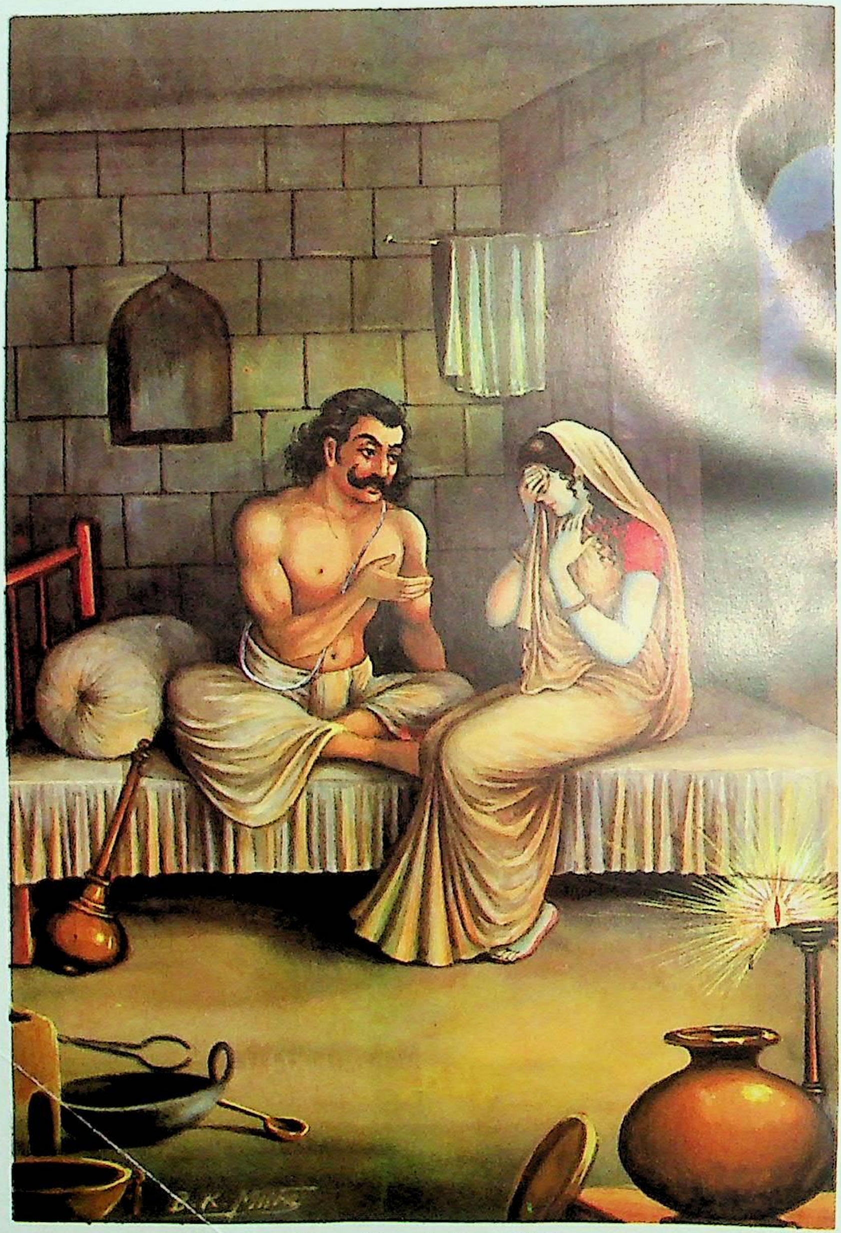
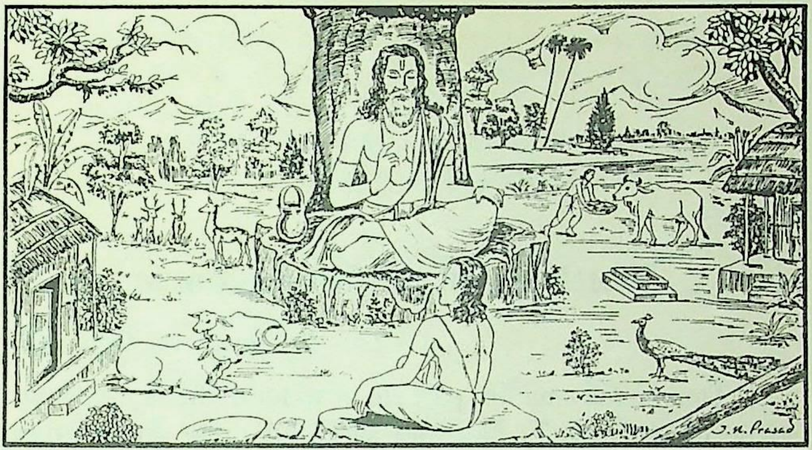


Draupadī wailing before Bhīmasena

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥



The KALYANA-KALPATARU

OR

THE BLISS

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

New Series
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यथा यूथपतिर्मत्तः कुञ्जरः षष्टिहायनः।
भूमौ निपतितं बिल्वं पद्भ्यामाक्रम्य पीडयेत्॥
तथैव च शिरस्तस्य निपात्य धरणीतले।
वामेन पुरुषव्याघ्र मर्द पादेन पाण्डव॥

"Just as an intoxicated sixty year old strong and mature elephant tramples and crushes with his feet a *Bilva* fruit fallen on the ground similarly O son of Pāṇḍu and tiger among men, fell his (Kīcaḳa's) head on the ground and crush it with your left foot."

(*Mahābhārata, Virāṭa Parva* XVIII)

◆◆◆◆◆

Truth about the Divine Form

—Late Sri Jayadayal Goyandka

Thus as the smallest particle of water in the sky, vapour, fog, cloud, drizzle, hail and snow all these are in truth nothing but water, even so everything possessed of attributes or attributeless, with or without form, gross or subtle, effect or cause, and whatever is beyond these, all are, in truth, God Himself.

The Lord said in the *Gītā*—

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः॥

(VII. 19)

"In the very last of all births, the man of realization worships Me, realizing that all this is God. Such a great soul is very rare."

In the *Bhāgavata,* the Lord said—

मनसा वचसा दृष्ट्या गृह्यतेऽन्यैरपीन्द्रियैः।
अहमेव न मत्तोऽन्यदिति बुध्यध्वमञ्जसा॥

(XI. 13. 24)

"Whatever is perceived through the mind, speech or sight, or any other organ of sense, all that is but I Myself. There is nothing at all apart from Me, know this for certain."

Secret of the divine form—

That omniscient, almighty, all-pervasive God, both with and without attributes, manifests Himself on earth as His divine Incarnation and His virtue, glory, truth and secret are so incomprehensible, infinite and divine in character that none but Himself can truly know Him. This is His secret.

In the *Gītā* the Lord says—

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया॥

(IV. 6)

"Though unborn and immortal, and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My *Yogamāyā* keeping My nature under control."

And Arjuna says—

सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव।
न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः॥
स्वयमेवात्मनाऽऽत्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम।

(X. 14-15)

"Keśava, I believe as true all that You tell me, Lord, neither gods nor the demons are aware of Your manifestation through *Līlā*. O Supreme *Puruśa* You Yourself know Yourself through Yourself."

Bringing out this secret of the Lord's form, the *Rāmacaritamānasa* says—

> "Then, manifesting Himself in numberless forms, the benevolent Lord met everybody, showing appropriate courtesy to all;
> All at once, and in a moment, He met everybody; Umā, the secret of it nobody knew."*

And he who meditates on the Form of the Lord is very dear to the Lord. This is also a top secret. The Lord Himself said—

> "Though everybody praises *Vaikuṇṭha,* and the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* also extol it;
> It is not as dear to Me as Ayodhya; this fact is known only to a rare few."†

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* अमित रूप प्रगटे तेहि काला। जथाजोग मिले सबहि कृपाला॥
छन महिं सबहि मिले भगवाना। उमा मरम यह काहुँ न जाना॥

† जद्यपि सब बैकुंठ बखाना। बेद पुरान बिदित जगु जाना॥
अवधपुरी सम प्रिय नहिं सोऊ। यह प्रसंग जानइ कोउ कोऊ॥

Absolute Happiness through Detachment

—Swami Ramsukhdas

I think that you can give up attachment, but the error is that you don't want to give it up. Now the question is how to give it up. Kindly pay attention to what I say and think over it with a cool head. Will your body, family, wealth and property with which you have attachment—live with you forever? Now you have no remembrance of the body and family etc., with which you had attachment in your previous lifetime. Similarly you will have to leave the things with which you have attachment now, but the attachment will go with you even after death and push you to the shackles of birth and death. Therefore this attachment is not advantageous at all.

You will be deprived of the worldly things but your attachment will remain which will lead you to nothing but bondage. It is not difficult to give up your attachment to the things which you will have to leave. If you give up attachment yourself, you will get freedom, peace, joy, bliss and emancipation. But if you die having your attachment to these things, the things will have to be left, but the attachment will lead you to troubles, disquietude and dependence.

I request you to pay attention to what I say, think over it and discuss. Attachment is harmful while detachment is advantageous. For example the house we are sitting in is not ours. But are we not getting all the comforts of light, fan, mike and shade etc.? We are getting comforts but we are detached from it. If the house and its contents and equipments are destroyed, we are not worried and disturbed. But if the same house is ours and we have attachment to it and it is destroyed, we shall be worried and perturbed. Thus this attachment will be harmful and will lead us to rebirth. We should follow the foot-steps of businessmen who do the business which yields only profit, not loss. By having attachment there is no profit and by giving it up there is no loss, because these things neither existed in the past, nor will remain in future. But attachment to them will lead to adversity. Try to understand this point and ask me if there is any doubt.

The body, the family, the wealth and the house you call yours—were they yours in the past and will they remain yours in future? Secondly can you change them as you wish? Can your son always do as you wish? Can you keep your body healthy and immortal forever? Can you continue your possession over the wealth? The answer to all these questions is 'No'. It means that they were neither yours, nor will remain yours nor are under your absolute control now. So how do you call them yours?

When you want to do any work, there is doubt whether you will be able to do it. Suppose you want to meet a person, you may or may not meet him. You wish a grandson to be born in the family, but that is doubtful. Similarly all such activities are doubtful. But is there any doubt about death? Death is certain and then you will have to leave all the things to which you have attachment . Therefore it is wise to have no attachment to them now, otherwise you will get disgrace and insult. Now tell me whether there is any harm in giving up your attachment to them.

You may ask how you will rear your family without having attachment to them. I want to tell you that you will rear your family in a better way by having detachment. Think with a cool head whether a saint or a spiritual guide can do good to you by having attachment or by having detachment? If a saint accepts you as his disciple, and has attachment with you. He can't do so much of good as the saint who has not accepted you as his disciple and has no attachment with you. Will a selfish man give right advice or an unselfish? Which advice will be more useful? Now you can understand it well that attachment is only harmful and disadvantageous, while detachment is useful and advantageous.

Nārāyaṇa! Nārāyaṇa! Nārāyaṇa!

❖❖❖❖

What can be done? Renunciation of the senses and desires is the only way out of this misery. If you want to be spiritual, you must renounce. This is the real test. Give up the world—this nonsense of the senses. There is only one real desire: to know what is true, to be spiritual. No more materialism, no more this egoism. I must become spiritual. Strong, intense must be the desire. If a man's hands and feet were so tied that he could not move and then if a burning piece of charcoal were placed on his body, he would struggle with all his power to throw it off. When I shall have that sort of extreme desire, that restless struggle, to throw off this burning world, then the time will have come for me to glimpse the Divine Truth.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

One who loves God lives in the soul, his true Self. He does everything for God, nothing for himself. He loves everybody, because he sees the world as the Lord's cosmic show. He can never be provoked to say or do anything in anger or with egotism, but only with desire to be of help to all. That is the attitude you must have. It has to be lived. It cannot come by any amount of pretense, but only when you see God in everyone—when you love everybody as a part of your love for God.

—*Self-Realization*

Harbour Noble Thoughts

—Late Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

Remember: he whose heart is an eternal playground of noble sentiments of truthfulness, equity, love, forgiveness, fortitude, honesty, contentment, tranquillity, selfabnegation and joy, finds the same virtues reflected in his life. Therefore constantly indulge in such noble thoughts alone.

Remember: so long as evil thoughts such as those of falsehood, injustice, spite, anger, intolerance, dishonesty, greed, restlessness, voluptuousness, remorse etc., continue to haunt the mind, a man can never be happy or pure in life. Therefore, drive them out of the heart. If, however, we constantly dwell upon the idea that these thoughts have to be expelled from the heart, they would not leave the heart, but would rather become stronger. By constantly repeating the resolve not to see the moon on a certain day when its sight is believed to bring infamy to the beholder, we are involuntarily led to behold it. Nobody would see the moon on that day if the idea of not seeing the moon were not present in the mind. The constant repetition in the mind of the idea that a certain house is haunted, excites fear even if ghosts were not present there. But he who has no idea of a ghost would never be afraid of it. Even so if we repeatedly dwell on the idea of expelling the evil thoughts, the latter would refuse to go out.

Remember: if evil thoughts are to be replaced by pure ones, proceed with the work of entertaining noble thoughts instead of dwelling upon the idea of ousting the former. In place of the mundane affairs and the sins and evils of the world, start dwelling upon the great divine virtues of the Lord such as His auspiciousness, His blessedness, His kindness, love, fondness for His devotees, sublimity, truthful nature, righteousness, tranquillity, blissful character, desirelessness, solicitude for the good of all, evenmindedness and so on. Start reflecting and pondering on the truth and mysteries of God. Commence hearing, singing and dwelling on the delightful and charming stories of His pastimes. Begin striving to meditate on His most attractive form, brimful with incomparable sweetness, which rains nectar all round and enchants the soul even of sages. Evil thoughts will automatically disappear as a sequel to this.

Mind you—do not think of evil even to introduce what is good. It is the thought of evil that keeps it alive and thriving.

Remember: the blissful Lord is a repository of endless exalted and divine attributes. Every single attribute of His is so holy, so comprehensive, so auspicious and so effective that once we start remembering and dwelling on them multitudes of happy thoughts and noble virtues will begin to flash of their own accord.

Remember: the whole world has emanated from God and it is permeated by Him through and through. God is absolutely blissful—the very ocean of virtues. The world too is, therefore, replete through and through with multitudes of blissful virtues. Your inner vision is clouded and accustomed to see the dark side of things. That is why your mind has become a playground of evil thoughts. It is haunted day and night by hosts of devilish ideas. Leave them as they are and do not think of turning them out. Only turn your eyes towards the blissful Lord's blissful character and the string of His noble virtues. When the string of His noble attributes finds a place in the heart, evil ideas will immediately disappear and come to an end in the same way as darkness disappears and comes to an end at sunrise.

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For Youth

Upanishadic Convocation

(Convocational Advice)

—*Prof. H. C. Gaur*

Dharmam Cara—

The word *Dharma*, used in this context, does not have an appropriate equivalent in English language. It would encompass concepts as 'religion; 'duty', 'law' (meaning justice), 'principles' etc. In the present context it is considered to refer to the code of (virtuous) conduct which the disciple, as a *Brahamcārī*, learnt from study of *Vedas*, *Smṛtis* and other scriptures. Among the four objectives *(Puruṣārtha)* of a human being:

- To follow the path prescribed by religion *(dharma)*
- To earn wealth *(Artha)*
- To enjoy the enjoyable *(Kāma)*
- To seek emancipation (from birth-death cycle) *(Mokṣa)*,

Dharma has been considered to be most important. But what is *Dharma* (virtuous, meaning rightful conduct) and what is *Adharma* (non-virtuous, meaning/sinful activities)? It is said: "Right and wrong (*Dharma* and *Adharma*) do not go about crying: 'here we are' nor do gods *(Deva)*, celestial beings *(Gandharva)* or ancestors *(Pitṛ)* say: this is right and this is wrong" (*Āpastamba Dharma Śāstra*, quoted by W. Doniger and B. Smith, *The Laws of Manu*, Penguin, p. xv).

Dharma (righteousness) is expressed as the conduct practised by people in accordance with scriptures. Manu said: "To all inquirers of virtue *(Dharma,Jñāna,Jijñāsu)*, *Śruti* (meaning, *Vedas*) is the Supreme authority. Also, the teaching of *Śruti* (and also *Smṛti*) should not be put to the test of logic, for virtue *(Dharma)* has emanated from these two.....the sense of virtue *(Dharmajñāna)* germintes into them, who are not attached to desire*(Kāma)* and wealth*(Artha)*. (*M.S.*: 2. 10, 13). Also, Lord Kṛṣṇa, while concluding discourse on traits of the divine (virtuous) and the non-divine (non-virtuous), told Arjuna:" Let the *Śāstras* be your authority in ascertaining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having known what is in accordance with *Śāstras*, you should act" (*B.G.*: 16.24).

Manu continues: "A person observing rules of good (virtuous) conduct acquires longevity, desirable progeny and incorruptible wealth (which is without decay). A good conduct also destroys the inauspicious (*Alakṣaṇa*, meaning lack of good distinguishing mark) traits, while a man of misconduct (an object of reproach) is condemned among people, suffers misery, is afflicted with disease and dies a premature death" (*M.S.* : 4.156, 157). "Also, one who is impious *(Adharmī)*, one whose wealth is ill-gotten, one who is always envious of others, none of these can enjoy happiness *(Sukha)* in this world" (*M.S.*: 4.170).

How does one recognize a man of virtue? The traits of a person with predominantly divine virtues (to be cultivated) and also of non-divine traits and the consequences of possessing them (with a view to be freed from them) were elaborately explained to Arjuna by Lord Kṛṣṇa in Discourse XVI of *Bhagvad Gītā*. More briefly, the ten attributes *(Dharma lakṣaṇa)* of a man of virtue, described by Manu, are: "contentment *(Dhṛti)*, forgiveness *(Kṣamā)*, non-attachment to worldly affairs *(Dama)*, non-stealing *(Asteya)*, purity *(Śauca)*, subjugation of senses *(Indriya-nigraha)*, knowledge of the immutable principle and erudition (learning), truthfulness *(Satya)*, lack of anger *(Akrodha)*" (*M.S.*: 6.92). In another context, the highest virtues of all men by which Lord (the soul of Universe) is pleased, considered as consisting of thirty virtues, were explained by *Devarṣi* Nārada to Yudhiṣṭhira (*Bhāgavata:* 7.11.8-12). These include the above as also traits as compassion *(Dayā)*, austerity *(Tapaḥ)*, endurance *(Titikṣā)*, non-violence *(Ahiṁsā)*, continence *(Brahamcarya)*, charity *(Dāna)*, straightforwardness *(Ārjavam)*, inquiry into the self (as distinct from the body), hearing, chanting, dwelling in the name and glory, worshipping and bowing to the Lord etc.

"In a nutshell", Manu said: (follow) "the general duties *(Dharma)* for all: non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, (external and internal) purity and subjugation of senses" (*M.S.:* 10.63). As a general rule of conduct, Manu said: "Do that work *(Karma)* by all means, doing which the conscience *(Antarātmā)* is happy (satisfied); avoid the contrary" (*M.S.* 4.161). Also, "Let him not be an atheist *(Nāstika)*, let him not revile (speak ill of, do *Nindā*) of (have contempt for) gods *(Deva)* and *Vedas*. Let him not have hatred *(Dveṣa)*, obstinacy, vanity (pride), anger and harshness" (*M.S.:* 4.163). "Even devoid of all auspicious traits *(Lakṣaṇa)*, a person of good conduct, believing (in God) and envying none, is enabled to live a hundred years (*M.S.:* 4.158).

Be not heedless from solemn recitation of scriptures *(svādhyāyāt mā pramada)*.

In those days the books, as we know now, were not there and the pupil had to depend on his memory (and recitation) for the knowledge of *Vedas* and other scriptures. This commandment is about solemn (daily) recitation of scriptures so that he did not forget what he had learnt. The idea is that the knowledge gained should not be allowed to glide away from the memory. Yājñavalkya has "......condemned the forgetting (of *Vedas* and other scriptures, which are hard to learn, as equivalent to slaying of a *Brāhmaṇa (Brahmahatyā)*." (quoted by S. Sarvānanda: *Taittirīyopaniṣad,* R. K. Math, p. 77). Thus the necessity of remembering what one has learnt, by repeated recitation, is stressed. S. Sarvānanda continues "....The knowledge (gained) in youth, is the wisdom in the age (to follow)".

Having offered the desirable wealth to the preceptor, do not cut off the line of progeny *(Ācāryāya priyaṁ dhanaṁ āhṛtya, prajā-tantum mā vyavacchetsīḥ)*

The desirable wealth could be in the form of an honorarium paid to the preceptor *(Gurudakṣiṇā)* on the successful conclusion of the *Brahamcaryaāśrama* activities but before the pupil was to leave the residence of the *Guru* or the *Gurukula.* There was no insistence on payment of any fee etc., before he was admitted by the preceptor or before entering the *Gurukula* institution or for his sustenance. The pupil stayed as a member of the family, sharing the household) duties and doing service to the preceptor (and also his wife) considering them as spiritual parent(s). But wealth is needed for continuation of these activities by the preceptor and the institutions. The pupil offered a token honorarium at the time of leaving, but later made suitable contributions from his savings when he started earning. This is how the pupils from succeding generations sustained these activities.

The interpretation/understanding of the commandment 'do not cut off the line of progeny' will depend on the mental make up of the *Brahmacārī.* For a *naiṣṭhika brahamcārī,* it may mean a succession of disciples. The idea is that at appropriate time as a *Guru* he would convey and share the knowledge and wisdom of *Vedas* and his experience of realization with the succeeding generation of disciples. To him the commandment is to maintain the succession of disciples by the teacher-disciple tradition *(Guru-śiṣya-Paramparā).* For the *Upkurvāṇa Brahamcārī,* who will enter the next phase of life as a householder (as a *Gṛhasthī),* the commandment would mean the line of progeny. He would do this by marriage and the procreation of a son and also the marriage of his son (raising of a grandson) (*Tait. Up.:* 1.9.1).

Procreation of a son is considered to free one from the (three) debts a *Gṛhasthī* owes to the ancestors (*M.S.:* 4.257). Procreation of a son is also considered to be one of the three strong desires (*Putreṣaṇā*). The word 'debt' should be understood in a proper perspective, since a son is also expected to perform *Śrāddha* ceremony for the (dead) ancestors. Would it mean that if a person did not beget a son, he is without discharge of the debt and cannot strive for self-emancipation? Manu has answered it thus: "Many thousand of priests who were chaste from their youth have gone to heaven without begetting offsprings to continue the family. Also, a virtuous wife who remains chaste after her husband has died, goes to heaven just like those chaste men, if she has no sons" (*M.S.:* 5.169, 170).

This writer would be inclined to conclude that those who do not beget a son should be considered as free from debts (by their *Karma* in the previous lives); for them the commandment would mean adopting a male child as per social customs of the community.

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Love is the marriage of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. The first condition of union with God is a state of love. Divine love fills the heart and overflows to others.

—*Swami Sivananda*

The same duty, if performed cheerfully and in an ecstatic mood with one's thought fixed on the Lord, turns into a spiritual discipline of a very high order.

Idleness (shirking one's duty) is highly detrimental. A sin can be expiated, but not this idleness. Shaking off idleness is the only atonement for it.

—*Jayadayal Goyandka*

Healthy Food for Body, Mind and Soul

—R. Kannan

We are living in an age of "fast food", "instant food", "food on wheels", "packed lunch" etc. The accent is on quickness of eating and titillating the palate rather than on the capacity of food. Dining out, has become very common. Further, we also hear words like "balanced diet", 'nutritious food", 'diet control' and mineral water which proclaim that the food processors know the importance of health to the consumers, "meus sana in corpore sano" is an oft-quoted Latin saying which means" a healthy mind in a healthy body". The inextricable link between mind and body, during good health or otherwise has been proved beyond doubt scientifically.

Dr. Clifford R. Anderson the eminent and popular Australian born physician writes in his book *"Your Guide to Health"*, that we cannot separate the body from the mind and soul. Body, mind and soul are a unit and therefore physical health depends to a very great degree upon mental and spiritual health. In other words, a good food is that which not only brings health to the body, but also ensures peace and rest to the mind and spirit of man.

It is not that our ancients were unaware of this fact. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII. 26.2) says—

आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः ।
सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवा स्मृतिः ।

Which means that the purity of the food which we eat leads to the purity of our physical body which in turn, leads to purity and strength of memory, will, intelligence and wisdom, all necessary for good spirituality.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself has thought it fit to talk about food and caution Arjuna and through him, the entire world, the importance of taking proper food and has explained the difference among three types of food. He says:—

"The foods that augment longevity of life, mental vigour, goodness, health, joy and cheerfulness and are juicy and nourishing enough and pleasing to taste are taken by the *Sāttvika* (i.e.) those who are characterised by *Sattva Guṇa*" (*Gītā* XVII. 8).

"The foods that are bitter, sour, saltish, very hot, pungent, dry and burning are taken by the *Rājasika* i.e. those with *Rājasa* traits and they produce pain (to both body and mind), grief (to the heart) and disease to the body" (*Ibid* XVII. 9).

"The foods which are stale (kept unused for a long time), tasteless, putrid (with a bad smell), prepared over night (previous day), corrupt and impure are taken by the *Tāmasika*, who have *Tāmasa Guṇa*, with delight" (*Ibid* XVII. 10).

Śrī Rāmānuja, has, in his *Gītā Bhāṣya* explained that each *Guṇa* of man is characterised by a particular type of food, which he eats and which in turn, is preferred by people who are predominantly of that *Guṇa* or nature. The conclusion is obvious. If we take *Sāttvika* food, our thoughts become *Sāttvika* and we tend to be more kind, considerate and compassionate towards fellow beings. This is the considered and consistant view of all *Ācāryas*.

Of course, *Sāttvika* food refers to vegetarian food only, as spiritually inclined persons will never think of non-vegetarian food. Almost all great religions are based on compassion towards living creatures. This principle has a bearing on *Ahiṁsā* or non-violence. The great sage Patañjali has explained that the first step towards attaining *Bhakti* or spiritualism is practising *Ahiṁsā* or non-violence.

All scriptures, *Vedas, Smṛtis, Gītā* etc., emphasise the importance of *Ahiṁsā* and this form of non-violence can be practised only by vegetarians. A non-vegetarian can never be considered to be one practising *Ahiṁsā* or non-violence. Some may argue that the plants have also life and hence eating vegetables would also amount to non-vegetarian food. In this context, it may be noted that the plants have only one organ, having no blood, or meat or bone in them. The consciousness in plants is thus of the lowest category and all scriptures clearly permit that eating of such single-organ plants or products of such plants does not result in killing and is not considered as violence. Whereas, the level of consciousness is gradually higher for two, three, four, five organ-creatures and killing of such creatures constitute violence, which is prohibited by scriptures. Further, what we eat affects our consciousness, emotions and experiential pattern of those slain creatures.

Hence, vegetarian food is the only ideal food for mankind from the point of nutrition, health, longevity, vigour etc., as has been proved by scientific facts.

Of course, even in the vegetarian food, we have to avoid certain vegetables and fruits which are detrimental to our health, emotions and spirituality which will have a bearing on our way of living.

Śrī Vedānta Deśika a polymath, and one of the greatest preceptors of India has written a compilation in Tamil called *"Āhāra Niyamam"* or "Food Regimen" comprising of 21 verses, which unambiguously spell out what to eat and what not to eat, besides when to eat, how the food is to be prepared and served etc.

According to him, we have to avoid taking any food brought to the house other than through the front door; food which has fallen from the mouth while eating; which has been seen by evil-minded persons; which has been burnt, which has had contact with an impure cloth; saliva and sneezed upon; or seen, smelt and touched by dog; food prepared on prohibited days; food smelt by animals; touched by sickly persons which are served by hateful persons; in which fly, worm, thread, hair and finger nails have fallen; any food partly eaten by other persons, rats, cocks, hens, crows and cats.

Foods to be avoided include double-cooked food, served by hands or in iron utensils (however uncooked items such as fruit, sugar have to be served by hand only), half eaten and kept separately, stale preparations, food brought from other houses (as we may not know how they have cooked), food prepared by others for themselves, food criticised by others, and those which smell of mud; or burnt; split by finger nails; salt which is visible and foods which generate bile. Ghee should not be added once eating has commenced.

Food served in the hand by another, eating by left hand, prepared by mendicants or recluses or in vessels belonging to them are to be avoided. Of course it goes without saying that morning food should be taken only after a bath and prayers. One should not eat for himself without partaking with the guests. The food prepared from vegetables which are not cleaned before cooking, which have been obtained through evil-means, which have been cooked alongwith uneatable things and which have had contact with excretions or cooked by unclean hands is to be avoided.

Any food which has not been offered to Lord who has provided the same to us should not be consumed nor should we eat items intended for God but not yet offered to Him. We should avoid eating anything about which we have no knowledge; which are unbearably hot, saltish, bitter, tasteless, unappealing, prepared from raw (unripe) vegetables and cooked with impure salts.

One should not use the lime prepared directly from lime shells. Further one should not take any food from which cream (essence) has been taken out (except butter milk). Similarly, fluid extrusions from trees except asafoetida are taboo for eating. Then comes a long list of grains, greens and vegetables which Swāmī Deśikan forbids us from eating. They are millet foods, products of mountain ebony (bauhimid variegata), white brinjal, banyan leaves or fruits, pipal leaves and other products of the tree, onion, garlic, certain type of water plants, bamboo shoots, henna leaves, belleric myrobalan, drumsticks, lotus roots, small sabre beans, bitter cucumber, pot herbs, water melon, mushroom, bottle gourd, sponge gourd, hemp, certain types of greens, spinach etc. We should also not eat vegetable brought from the gardens without permission or from stock intended for others.

Now we come to point when and where we should not eat. Swāmī Deśikan says that we should not take any food on *Ekādaśī* days; at mid night or in darkness; dawn or dusk by moon-light or light by fire or in wide open spaces. Further wood apples and puffed rice during day time and food mixed with sesame gingelly oil and curds at night are also to be avoided.

From the long list of taboos, we can conclude that Swāmī Deśikan intends to save us from food which are detrimental not only to our health but also endanger positive emotions and spiritual elevation.

Now, he tabulates what we should prefer to eat. One can take the remainder of food left by one's father, preceptor, and elder brother, as permitted by scriptures (The interpretation given by some scholars is that this refers to the remains in the vessels, after serving the above mentioned people).

We can take cane-juice, curd, milk, ghee, nuts, pepper, honey, cardamom, dew-water etc., as they are pure in nature. We can consume river water, as it carries away impurities by its flow. We can use dried vegetables, spices and flattened flour etc., if they are properly preserved.

Water, root-vegetable, ghee, milk and consecrated food after offering at sacrifices, medicines can be taken during fasting days. Again, sweet thickened milk, round salted confections, preparations made out of jaggery, accepted green vegetables, cooked rice soaked in water and preserved well, food mixed with buttermilk, ghee, milk, curds, even if old can be taken without demur. A little ghee or honey will remove their staleness.

Further Swāmī Deśikan goes on to regulate the consumption of milk and its utility. While we can drink pure cow's milk and buffalo's milk, we should not take milk of horse, donkey, sheep, camel etc. We should never take milk mixed with salt, or milk from a pregnant cow, a cow with two calves, a cow which gives milk through another cow's calf or split milk. We should aovid taking milk kept in a copper vessel or milk which has been overheated or milk purchased from brahmins.

Drinking water has also not escaped Swāmī Deśikan's attention. He suggests that we should not take water stored in the previous day (except Ganges water), remnant water from a vessel after washing the feet, water from a small pool, or muddy stream or a doubtful source, or found in wayside water holes, water from a *Dhobīghāṭa* or poured from a conch, rain water from sky before it reaches the earth. Also to be avoided is heated coconut water which should be taken only fresh.

Regarding consumption of betel leaves and nuts, Swāmī Deśikan advises that we should take the betel nuts only after taking the leaves. We should not eat the base, top and the central ridge of the betel leaves. A widow or*Brahmacārī* or *Saṁnyāsī* should not consume betel leaves at any time. The leaf which has been used to keep the lime paste should not be taken. While taking betel leaves, one should avoid drinking water. The consumption of betel leaves should be avoided, when one is observing fast, particularly on *Ekādaśī* days. Also we should not consume these leaves which are kept as seedlings.

Before concluding his dissertation, Swāmī Deśikan makes a pertinent point. Acceptability or otherwise of any food item depends on several factors, viz., caste, nature, stage in life *(Āśramas)* counting time, duty, obligation, traditions and such divisions. One should consult their elders before taking any food article nor should one take any food as one likes, before knowing the real effect of it. As one's knowledge is limited, one should follow the instructions of holy scriptures, great *Ācāryas,* who out of their compassion to humanity, have clearly laid down certain norms about foods; what to take, when to take, how much to take, how to take etc. Once we follow these instructions, we will consume only *Sāttvika* food; our minds and thoughts will become clear, which will lead to good action and deed and we will have not only a healthy body, but a pure mind to lead a spiritual life also.

The concluding words of Swāmī Deśikan in this beautiful treatise are pregnant with import. He says, "This is a dark world. To redeem us, Lord Kṛṣṇa has sung the great *Bhagavadgītā* which is like a lantern to show us the light. He has set the rules for every type of activity including eating. I have followed the teachings of our saintly ancients in this regard and have codified them for the benefit of all mankind. One thing is certain, the human body and the materials of the world are perishable. There are people in this world who advocate that the body is the be-all and end-all of existence and hence anything and everything can be eaten. Let us not fall into their trap and proceed straight to hell. Let us maintain unswerving devotion in the Supreme Lord on whose chest resides the Lotus-born Goddess and accept only *Sāttvika* types of food to maintain and nourish our bodies.

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A travel Astray

All the doors are kept open
And the thieves entered freely!
You never ask me to quit—
Nor I am competent to neck them out—
I know—
You allow me here
Until my advance of rent is exhausted.
Afterwards,
You won't hesitate to dispel me out—
How unkind You are!
I toil to castle up in the airs-
You break them and pull me down
I am astray
And my way is full of briars
You never try to direct me the right path
I know not how to befriend you.
And you are not kind enough
To step down and stretch your helping hand.

English Rendering: Dr. Vadavalli Chakrapani Rao

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Learn to Live for Others

—Roshan Lal Sharma

Disciple: Service of others is a very high ideal of life. How can we put it into practice?

Master: The extremely selfish man cares only for his bodily comforts. When (through the grace of God and through the company of saints) a man's selfishness reduces, he learns to serve others, firstly his family members, then society, then country and lastly all mankind or all beings even animals and plants. God-realised persons are able to serve all in the best way as they see their beloved God everywhere in the form of men, animals and even plants. Therefore if you want to serve others, the best thing is to first realise God. After self-realization alone you would be able to see God in all beings and thereafter serve all selflessly (without having any personal desire).

Disciple: What is the highest ideal; God-realization or service of others?

Master: Service of mankind, service of all beings is the Highest aim. But you cannot do that—unless you first realise God and see Him as *Ātman* of all beings. Those who have not realised their Divinity, can never truly serve others. Desires and ego would not go without self-realisation. As long as your ego persists, as long as you have worldly or heavenly desires, you cannot be unselfish and cannot serve others in true sense. Worldly people may talk of service. But they always look to their interest first. Whenever there is a clash between personal interest and service of others, they would give up their philosophy of service. So you see that service of others and God realisation are linked issues. First ideal should be to realise God. Thereafter we should serve others. Go into the world. Serve the poor, the downtrodden, the sick, the miserable, the illitrate, the weak and the wicked. Inspire others for God realisation. A religion which cannot give morsels of food to the hungry stomachs, which cannot wipe out tears from the eyes of widows or orphans, which cannot serve the sick and downtrodden, is no religion. Learn to die for others, if necessary. Only animals live for themselves. Men must learn to live and die for others. That energy would come to you only after God-realisation.

Disciple: Should we not try to serve others unless we realise God or our true self?

Master: I have no objection to that. We should try to reduce our selfishness and try to serve others or look to the comforts and interests of others to the extent possible for us. Reduce your desires and comforts and try to make others comfortable. First serve your family, then neighbours, then society or country. Thus go on widening your circle of serving others. But remember that unrealised persons have their limitations. Still they should try their best. Simultaneously they should do *Sādhanās* to realise God. True service (without having any personal desire or egotism) would be possible only after God-realisation. This should be clearly understood. After God-realisation we would be able to serve all beings, even the animals and plants as we would see them as the very manifestation of God or our true-self. That would be real service.

Disciple: What difference does it make whether a man realises God or not. Can we not straight way go ahead to serve others?

Master: I have no objection to your serving others under all conditions. But it makes a lot of difference if you do not first realise God. Self-realisation is the first and foremost duty of a man. Suppose God appears before you and asks you for a boon. Will you request Him for having His vision at all times or will you ask him to make you fit to serve others by opening some hospitals or charity homes. Naturally we should first request Him for His love, for *Brahma Jñāna* or self-realisation. Moreover as long as a man has not attained "knowledge of spirit", he cannot truly serve others because of the following limitations:

(a) He is not egoless (b) He is not desireless. (c) He has not given up the attraction for comforts of his body. (d) He has not discarded sense of mine (d) He has not renounced the spirit of doership.

Therefore, an unrealised person cannot serve others quite selflessly. After doing service he cannot discard the egotism of serving others. He would have the feeling that he is the doer, so he would like that others should appreciate him or honour him for his work of service. These disqualifications would mar the very spirit of service.

(2) It is an established fact in the world that everyone likes to serve himself first. After self-realisation the whole world becomes our very Self *(Ātman).* Therefore no one remains a stranger or "the other." We serve all as they are our very self. In this spirit of service we are not obliging anyone. The question of egotism of service also does not arise. We can also not expect any honour or appreciation by serving our Self.

Therefore the best way to serve is to first realise our Divinity and then do service.

Disciple: Would you tell us the various types of service that we can render to others?

Master: First type of service is giving food, clothing, money, etc., to poor and needy. We can, if we are capable, construct hospitals, widow homes, orphanages and homes for the poor. Even superior to it is the service of imparting education to the helpless to enable them to stand on their feet. The highest service is to impart knowledge of God *(Brahma Jñāna).* We should look at our capacity and serve all beings in the way which suits us most or of which we are capable. Speaking polite words to the miserable and sorrowful hearts, is also service. Praying for imparting peace and *Sad-Buddhi* to all is also a type of service. Every little service rendered in an unselfish way, is great. If we can serve others in all the above (quoted) ways we should do that without any hesitation. Otherwise we should do whatever we can. Even if you can bring morsels of food to the hungry mouths, thrice blessed art thou. Everyone cannot give *Brahma Jñāna* to others. Only those who possess it can impart that knowledge to others. But everyone can serve others in some way or the other. By serving others we are actually serving God or our own Self *(Ātman)* because God is manifesting in all forms.

Disciple: Can we serve the wicked also?

Master: (1) We can serve all beings irrespective of their good or bad qualities. If we pray that God may grant *Sad-Buddhi* to the wicked, then that would be a very good service to them. Pray that the wicked may give up their wickedness and may become good natured.

(2) With the help of His *Māyā,* God is playing the part of saints as well as sinners. Otherwise His *Līlā* would lose all charm. In order to enhance the greatness of saints, God has created sinners and wicked persons. If all wickedness vanishes from the earth, the greatness of saints would have no value. So we should not hate anyone. Hatred is inverted attachment. We must renounce both goodness and badness and see God in all beings. That is practically possible only after self-realisation. That is why only God-realised people can really serve all without distinction. In an unrealised state it is very difficult to serve those who harm us or cut our

throats..... During 1947 riots we heard of a saint who used to live in a hut in Delhi. Some religious fanatics came there and thinking that the Saint wore a yellow garb and was a monk of other religion, wanted to kill him. While they were killing him with a dagger the saint smiled and said, "You are my beloved God and none else. You are He, you are He." The saint died with these words on his lips. He did not offer any resistance. There was no hatred in his eyes. This is the state of a realised saint.

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If we look at life impersonally, we find it to be wonderful. We see it as a show; everyday a different moving picture. We would not like to see the same film over and over again; it would be pointlessly monotonous. If life did not have its ups and downs, its victories and hard knocks, it would hardly be worthwhile. Only do not take it too seriously, for then it becomes extremely miserable. If you want to attain the unchangeable, imperturbable state of spirit, be thou always of even mind." O Arjuna! The relativities of existence have been overcome, even here in this world, by those of fixed equal-mindedness. Thereby are they enthroned in spirit—verily, the taintless, the perfectly balanced Spirit."

—Self-Realization

Think not that you are poor; money is not power, but goodness, holiness.

—Swami Vivekananda

First practise the virtues in your own life and then preach them to others.

—Chaitanya

For Women

Viṣṇupriyā

Viṣṇupriyā is a name that arouses in our heart an idea of feminine chastity and devotion embodied together. It is a name—one of the greatest among the chaste ladies of India through ages together. She was the divinely spouse of Caitanya Deva or Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu or Caitanya Mahāprabhu—an incarnation of loving aspect of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Caitanya got himself initiated in *Saṁnyāsa,* she was extremely pained, even though she did not make any protest nor did she try to become an obstacle in the sublime path of her beloved husband. Yet her heart was literally broken into pieces. She tossed and fluttered day and night like a fish out of water. This intensity of her love compelled Mahāprabhu to visit her once more while he was on the way to Vrindavana.

She asked him how she could pass her life without him and the tears rolled down on her cheeks. The compassionate Mahāprabhu gave his wooden sandals to her as a barge to cross the ocean of her life. He advised her to keep her body alive. As instructed by her Lord she worshipped those sandals and meditated upon the lotus-feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. To her, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya were not different entities. In the separation of her spouse she went on reducing her body day by day. She never allowed any slackness on her part to serve her mother-in-law and worshipped her like a deity with all faith and reverence. The mother was already pained on account of her only son and to add fuel to the fire her daughter-in-law was in the habit of observing fast more often than not. The mother tried to persuade her daughter-in-law not to mortify herself through penance and fast etc. Yet Viṣṇupriyā developed a strange type of thoughtlessness to her body.

The bodily condition of the mother was extremely poor and she was on the verge of death due to the separation of her beloved son. She had no more strength even to manage her body and one day she went to the bank of Gaṅgā to breathe her last. Viṣṇupriyā also followed her in a palanquin. There on the shore of Gaṅgā the mother left her body. Now Viṣṇupriyā was quite a desolated body. During the same period she received with a heavy heart the news of *Mahānirvāṇa* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Viṣṇupriyā fell down unconscious. When she came to her senses again she rejected even water to reach her mouth. The worship of the sandals and muttering the *Mahāmantra* was constantly going on unbroken.

One day she received a divine instruction to continue her body in the world for some more time. In the compliance of divine instruction she discontinued fasting and sipped some water but hereafter she engrossed herself in a more severe penance with the intention of decaying her body.

She already was not in the habit of talking to the other male persons, now she refused even to allow *Darśana* to the bonafide devotees also. Once she closed the door, then it was on her sweet will to open it or not and to give *Darśana* to the seekers or not. Very rarely she allowed once in a while some blessed person to have *Darśana* of her feet. One day she was instructed in a dream to have an image of Mahāprabhu built and installed under the Neem tree in front of the house. The devotees got the image built and installed it ceremoniously. The report is that the devotees those days could very well see Mahāprabhu in person in that statue.

Her penance went on magnifying day by day and night by night. In the morning when she was free from the routine worship of the sandals, she had a fistful of rice grains before her. She uttered one *Mantra* and picked up one rice grain out of the stock. Till afternoon this process continued and after that she cooked that rice whatever little it was. That cooked rice she offered to the Lord as well as to Mahāprabhu without even salt or vegetable. Out of that she took a little amount for her food and the rest was distributed among the devotees. These days the separation from her husband grew unbearable to her and she was almost mad. One day she prostrated herself at the feet of her lord and thereafter no body saw her mortal frame any more.

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What are you to do when you are placed in this world? Give up everything to Him, resign yourself to Him, and there will be no more trouble for you. Then you will come to know that everything is done by His will.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

तस्मादृचः साम यजूंषि दीक्षा
यज्ञाश्च सर्वे क्रतवो दक्षिणाश्च।
संवत्सरश्च यजमानश्च लोकाः
सोमो यत्र पवते यत्र सूर्यः॥

"From Him (emerge) the *Ṛk*, *Sāma* and *Yajus* *Mantras*, initiation, all the sacrifices—whether with or without the sacrificial stake—offerings to *Brāhmaṇas*, the year, the sacrificer, and the worlds where the moon sanctifies (all) and where the sun (shines)."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 1. 6)

He is true in the truest sense of the word who is true in word, in thought, and in deed.

—*Mohammed*

Maharṣi Raman Answers

Qn. Men of the world that we are, we have some kind of grief or another and do not know how to get over it. We pray to God and still are not satisfied. What can we do?

Ans. Trust God.

The present difficulty is that the man thinks that he is the doer. But it is a mistake. It is the Higher Power which does everything and the man is only a tool.

The purpose of One's birth will be fulfilled whether you will it or not. Let the purpose fulfil itself.

The Higher Power knows what to do and how to do it. Trust it.

Qn. Is it right to think that all that happens to us is God's Ordainment, and therefore, only good?

Ans. Of course it is.

He ordains everything and the universe acts accordingly.

Whether you recognise the Power or not the scheme of things does not alter. Why should you bear your load on the head when you are travelling in a train. It carries you and your load whether the load is on your head or on the floor of the train. You are not lessening the burden of the train by keeping it on your head but only straining your self unnecessarily.

For God who has sent us into the world has His own plans and that will certainly work itself out.

God has His own plans and all these go on according to that. No one need worry as to what happens.

To entrust oneself to His care is the only thing left for us; total surrender is the only way, therefore, surrender to God.

The Divine Will prevails all the times and under all circumstances. The individuals cannot act of their own accord. Recognise the force of the Divine Will and keep quite. Each one is looked after by God. One should abide by His Will. Again, there is no need to let him know your needs. He knows them Himself and will look after them.

Qn. But God helps those who help themselves. So?

Ans. Certainly help your self and that is itself according to God's Will. Every action is prompted by Him only. Help yourself so that you may become strong. That is done by complete surrender. That means you offer yourself to Him. You then abide by His Will.

The Ordainer controls the fate of Souls in accordance with their *Prārabdha Karmas*. Whatever is destined not to happen, will not happen try as you may. What is destined to happen will happen, do whatever you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent.

Place your burden at the feet of the Lord of Universe, who accomplishes everything. Remain all the time steadfast in the heart in the Transcendental Absolute.

God knows the past, present and future. He will determine the future for you and accomplish the work. What is to be done, will be done at proper time. Do not worry. Abide in heart and surrender your acts to the Divine.

One who has faith and belief that there is a higher power guiding and controlling one's affairs, need not be concerned about what is happening.

Body activity is pre-ordained. No body can claim mind control as birth right. It can be acquired through constant practice and sense of discrimination. Mind control is your free will.

That is no more foolish than saying that you bear all the cares, burdens and responsibilities of life; the Lord of the universe bears the whole burden. You only imagine that you do. You can hand over all your burdens to Him. Whatever you have to do, you will be made an instrument for doing it at the right time. Do not imagine that you cannot do it unless you have the desire to. It is not desire that gives you the necessary strength. The strength is the Lord's.

Qn. How should I practise invocation?

Ans. When one uses the name of God one should call on him with yearning and unreservedly surrender oneself to him. Only after such surrender is the name of God constantly with you.

Qn. What is *Jñāna* ?

Ans. After the mind rejects objects, one after another, as transient and unreal, that which survives this elimination is *Jñāna*.

Just as you avoid the cares of home life when you are here, go home and try to be equally unconcerned and unaffected there.

Escape from the 'I-am-the-doer' illusion.

When a *Mantra* is repeated if one watches the source from which the *Mantra* sound is produced, the mind is absorbed in That; that is *Tapaḥ*.

—*Compiled by* M. L. Chhibber

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एष ह देवः प्रदिशोऽनु सर्वाः
पूर्वो ह जातः स उ गर्भे अन्तः।
स एव जातः स जनिष्यमाणः
प्रत्यङ् जनांस्तिष्ठति सर्वतोमुखः॥

"This very deity is all the directions and all the intermediate directions. He was born as the first. He, again, exists in the womb. He, verily, is the one born; He is (also) the one going to be born. He exists in all beings; He has His faces everywhere."

—*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (II.16)

50 Years of India's Independence—Achievements, Failures and Solution

—R. N. Lakhotia

It is indeed a happy moment in the lives of the present generation that we are witnessing the celebrations of 50 years of India's Independence. I was a witness to the momentous day of August 15, 1947 when the country's leadership was transferred in such able leaders like Mahātmā Gāndhī, Pt. Jawāharlāla Nehrū, Sardār Patela, Dr. Rājendra Prasāda, C. Rājagopālācārī and the like. What a contrast the present leadership is to these stalwarts of India's freedom who were men of dedication, sacrifice and character. Today, most of the political leaders are involved in one scam or the other. In this article, I have analysed briefly our main achievements and failures of these 50 years and outlined the measures by which we can face the challenges boldly.

Great Achievements:

The slavery of more than a thousand years of the rule by the Muslims and the British ended 50 years ago. Though India was partitioned, yet freedom is after all freedom. It was due to the great political sagacity and the statesmanship of Sardār Patela that about 550 Princely States voluntarily agreed to merge in the main stream to lay foundation of a united and a great Bhārat, which was the biggest achievement since Independence. Another important achievement was the adoption of the Constitution and declaration of India as Republic on 26th January, 1950. By and large we have maintained the democratic traditions by holding free and fair elections since then. Many new industries have been set up and many scientific institutions and other institutions have been established. The economic liberalisation is the watchword today.

Present Challenges and Problems: Political System at cross-roads:

Despite the various achievements since Independence there are many challenges faced by the nation today. One of them is the danger to the institution of democracy. The recent elections have proved that the electorate does not have faith in any one political party, with the result that a minority government with the help of the outside support of many small political parties which, during the elections, have been opposed to it, is ruling the nation. Criminalisation of politics is another grave danger. What is needed is a national debate on the question as to how to reform the electoral system or whether to shift to a Presidential form of governement.

Danger to National unity and integration:

In recent years, many terrorist and disruptive activities have been brought to light. Besides, cases of kidnapping and rape in broad daylight are on increase. Ordinary citizens often face great risk to their lives. The government is forced to compromise with the disruptive and militant forces. The problem of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been solved. Besides, the educated elite feel ashamed in speaking in Hindi or in their own mother tongue. All these are the grave dangers to the integration and unity of the nation.

Secularism wrongly defined:

One of the greatest mistakes during this period is the wrong interpretation to the expression "secularism" by equating it with non-*Dharma* or non-religion instead of describing it as "non-sectarian". What was necessary was equal respect to all persons following different faiths, as understood in the correct meaning of the expression *Sarva Dharma Samabhāva* i.e., respect for all religions instead of *'Dharma Nirapekṣa'* i.e., indifference to religion. The latter is having its adverse effects on the culture of the country and is responsible for mindless copying of the Western way of living and is having perverse effect on the education and character of administrators.

Decline in national morality and wide spread corruption:

There has been a gradual decline in moral principles. Corruption has spread its tentacles so much today as India has never witnessed in the past. In all aspects of life, be it politics, social work or religion or any other sphere—we find the existence of rampant corruption. Respect is being given only to persons with political or money power, thus goading the younger generation to get money or political power by any means, however immoral they may be. Abortions and "AIDS" cases are on increase.

Cultural Invasion of Television:

The great improvement in information technology and communication has, no doubt, made available various types of entertainment for the common people but this is not without its evil effects in the form of cultural invasion of various T.V. programmes, where we openly find the unnecessary presence of violence, crime and promotion of smoking and drinking as a step to higher social status through the different T.V. programmes.

Economic inequalities and poverty:

Though lakhs of persons have become very rich and are having a life style which can be compared to the best in the world, yet economic inequalities have widened and the number of unemployed and people below the poverty line have not shown any significant decline. It is unfortunate that in the traditional vegetarian societies of India, non-vegetarian food in general and eggs in particular are being promoted to the detriment of ethics and health of the people. Though export growth is talked about, yet it is unfortunate that there is no solid progress in this regard as can be seen from the fact that India which had 2.2% share in the world exports in 1950 has about 1% only now. A small city like Hong Kong with a population of less than 1% of India's population and only 0.03% in size has doubled its exports. Likewise, China, Taiwan and Korea have made comparatively great progress in this regard. In the "Where to do business" survey published by the *Economist* of London in May, 97, India does not figure in 30 most attractive countries. Likewise, India ranks 42nd in terms of skills in 45 developing countries. Our foreign dèbt is on increase and price rise is not under control. The quantum of black money generation and proliferation has increased considerably. One of the major problems of the cities is air pollution. There are more than one lakh villages in the country where drinking water facility is not available for which the present Independence celebrations do not have any real meaning in practical life.

Solution:

We have not to become pessimistic but what is desired is a concerted effort on the part of the Government, voluntary social organisations and the people so that once again India achieves milestones not only in economic progress but in moral progress as well and is able to make its presence felt in the comity of nations. For this, a few suggestions are outlined below:

1. National Government:

One of the important requirements for preserving the unity and integrity of the country is to have a proper coordination between the different States, and the people belonging to different religions. The various political parties should rise above petty party politics and think of a National Government to provide political stability.

2. Electoral Reforms:

For combating corruption and having better ethical standards electoral reforms are most needed so that the influence of money in elections is minimised and expenditure curtailed to the maximum.

3. Building moral and spiritual traditions:

The educational system of the country must be thoroughly overhauled so that every citizen feel really proud in calling himself as "Indian". Further, various ethical and spiritual principles of different religions must be taught in all educational institutions so that the students develop the feeling of compassion and love towards others. This would also require a great change in the regulatory policy regarding films and television programmes for a moral and cultural revival.

4. Economic Reforms:

Economic liberalisation has to be such that the citizens are inspired to put in their best and not to resort to tax evasion. For this, the exemption limit of income-tax has to be raised and the maximum rate of income-tax has to be fixed at about 15%. Likewise, simultaneous tax reforms have to be achieved to drastically cut the stamp duty and sales-tax to make a permanent dent in the problem of black money so that we do not need another Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme in future. The foreign capital should be invited only in high-tech areas and not for cola and pizza or junk foods. There should be a complete ban on export of meat with an embargo on new slaughter houses so that the cattle wealth of the country is preserved. Environmental pollution has to be effectively checked by according it the top most priority, which will also save billions in health care on the one hand and result in better health of the people on the other. We have to face the challenges boldly. If we want to be successful in tackling these challenges for making the country enter the 21st century with dignity and pride, then we should try to root-out the seven evils which Mahātmā Gāndhī beautifully described as (1) Business without morality, (2) Entertainment without spirituality, (3) Politics without principles, (4) Knowledge without character, (5) Science without humanity, (6) Wealth without duty, and (7) Respect without sacrifice.

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The Schools of Vedānta

—*Akula Rajendra Babu*

Introduction—

The *Sūtras* or aphorisms of Veda Vyāsa are the basis of the *Vedānta* philosophy. Different commentators have variously explained these *Sūtras*. From these interpretations have arisen several schools of philosophy viz.—

Commentator —	**Schools of Philosophy**
1. Bhagavatpāda Ādi Śaṅkarācārya	*Kevala Adwaita* philosophy.
2. Śrī Bhāṣyakāra or Śrī Rāmānujācārya	Qualified Monism or *Viśiṣṭādwaita* philosophy.
3. Śrī Madhwācārya	*Dwaita* philosophy.
4. Śrī Nimbārkācārya	*Bhedābheda*—Dualistic Monism.
5. Śrī Vallabhācārya	Pure Monism or *Śuddha Adwaita* philosophy.
6. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and	*Acintya Bhedābheda* philosophy.
7. Śrī Mekaṇḍa Deva	*Śaiva Siddhānta* philosophy.

Each system of philosophy treats of three main problems viz., God, World and Soul. The several schools of philosophy are only different attempts at discovering the truth.

The different *Ācārya Puruṣas* belonging to distinctly different cults became founders of sects and great system builders. The followers of these schools sought to prove their own tenets of orthodox authority by interpreting *Vedānta Sūtras* in accordance with their claim to be based on and regularly evolved from ancient tradition.

All schools have the common basis-Sūtras—

The *Vedānta* schools base their doctrines on the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads*, the *Vedānta Sūtras* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* are regarded as the most authoritative scriptures. They are called *Prasthāna Traya Granthas*. The true nature of *Brahman* has formed different views, been explained by different commentators only on *Vedānta Sūtras*.

Metaphysical thought of three main schools—

The founders of the three main schools of metaphysical thought of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Madhwācārya are the most illustrious commentators on the *Vedānta Sūtras*. The three savants and seers have stressed much of their own theories such as *Adwaitavāda* (unqualified non-dualism or uncompromising or rigorous monism). *Viśiṣṭādwaitavāda* (differentiated or qualified monism) and *Dwaitavāda* (strict or rigorous dualism).

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has in view while preparing his commentary chiefly the purpose of combating baneful effects which blind ritualism has brought to bear upon Hinduism.

Monism *(Adwaita)*, Qualified Monism *(Viśiṣṭādwaita)* and Dualism *(Dwaita)* are the three metaphysical thoughts. To the ultimate Truth viz., *Para Brahman* these are stages of approaches. The truths revealed by the three *Ācārya Puruṣas* are not contradictory but are complimentary to one another. These stages are arranged harmoniously in a graded series of spiritual experiences and culminate eventually in the *Adwaita Vedāntic* realisation of the Absolute transcendental *Triguṇātīta Ananta Brahman*.

1. Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya says:

"Man is identical with *Brahman* or the Eternal soul.

2. Śrī Rāmānujācārya says:
"Man is a ray or spark of God."

3. Śrī Madhwācārya says:
"Man is the servant of God."

4. A *Dwaitin* wants to serve the Lord as a servant. He wishes to play with the Lord as a child plays with his/her mother.

The ardent desire of a *Viśiṣṭādwaitin* is to transform himself to a state like Lord Nārāyaṇa *(Sārūpya)* and enjoy the divine. He does not wish to merge himself or to become identified with the Lord. He wishes to remain as a spark.

A *Jñānī* merges in *Brahman* and wishes to be identical with it.

The teachings of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya can be summed up in half a verse:

"ब्रह्म सत्यम् जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः"।

Brahman (the Absolute) is alone real, this world is unreal and the *Jīva* or the individual soul is non-different from *Brahman.*

In Śrī Rāmānuja's system, the Lord (Nārāyaṇa) has two inseparable *Prakāras* or modes viz., the world and the souls. These are related to Him as attributes in a substance. Matter and souls constitute the body of the Lord. The Lord is their indweller, the controlling Reality. Matter and souls are the subordinate elements. They are termed as *Viśeṣaṇas*—attributes. God is the *Viśeṣya* or that which is qualified.

In the Madhwācārya system Hari or Viṣṇu is the Supreme Being. The world is real. The difference is true. All the *Jīvas* are dependant on Hari, the Lord. There are three grades of superiority or inferiority among the individual souls. Liberation is the individual soul's enjoyment of its innate Bliss. *Bhakti* or devotion without faults is the means of attaining *Mokṣa.* Perception, inference and the scriptures are the three *Pramāṇas* or ways of knowledge. Hari is knowable only through the *Vedas.*

Nimbārkācārya re-conciles all the different views regarding the Lord touched by Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Madhwācārya and others and proves that their views are all true with reference to the particular aspect of *Brahman.*

Śrī Nimbārkācārya admits *Brahman* as the Supreme Reality without a second. The world and the *Jīvas* are only partial manifestations of this power *(Śakti).*

Jīva and *Brahman* are self-conscious. *Jīva* is limited. *Brahman* is infinite and independant Reality. *Jīva* and *Prakṛti* are dependant realities. *Jīva* is the enjoyer *(Bhoktā).* The world is the enjoyed one *(Bhogya)—Brahman* is the Supreme Controller *(Niyantā).*

The philosophy of Śrī Vallabhācārya is *Śuddha Adwaita* or pure Monism because he does not admit *Māyā* like Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya and believes that the whole world of matter and souls is real and is only a subtle form of God. Those who bring *Māyā* for the explanation of the world are not pure *Adwaitins* because they admit a second to *Brahman.* Vallabhācārya holds that *Brahman* creates the world without any connection with such a principle as *Māyā* but Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya traces the universe to *Brahman* through the power of *Māyā.*

Hence the Vallabhācārya's system is called Pure Monism or *Śuddha Adwaita.* He expounded this system in *Aṇu-Bhāṣya* in his commentary on *Brahma Sūtras.* This system of thought is known by the name *Brahmavāda.*

Śrī Vallabhācārya says that the entire Universe is real and is subtly *Brahman.* The individual souls and the world are in essence one with *Brahman. Jīva, Kāla* (Time) and *Prakṛti* or *Māyā* are eternal existences but they have no separate existence apart from *Brahman.* He further stresses on grace and devotion. *Anugraha* helps to attain God-realisation.

In Caitanya Mahāprabhu philosophy they admit God, souls and *Māyā* or *Prakṛti, Śuddha Sattva* and *Kāla* or time. The world and souls depend on God. They are neither one with God nor different from him. There is an incomprehensible difference—non-difference *(Acintya Bhedābheda).*

Just as the Sun has its light and the fire its heat so the supreme god Kṛṣṇa has naturally his energies or *Śaktis* which are mysterious and incomprehensible.

The energies are of three kinds viz., *Cit Śakti, Jīva Śakti* and *Māyā Śakti.* They are also called *Antaraṅga, Taṭastha* and *Bahiraṅga* respectively. *Jīva Śakti* is called *Taṭastha* because it occupies an intermediate place between *Cit Śakti* and *Māyā Śakti.*

Cit Śakti created *Vaikuṇṭha.* There is only pure *Sattva* in *Vaikuṇṭha. Māyā* has no access here. *Kāla* (Time) cannot execute its destructive power.

The souls are created by the *Taṭastha Śakti* or *Jīva Śakti.*

The *Jīva* can have God-realisation through spiritual love or *Prema* to Lord Kṛṣṇa. *Bhakti* overcomes the force of *Karma. Bhakti* is the way to the final emancipation. Through *Bhakti,* the soul attains a status of equality with God but he is never absorbed in Him. He is freed from the round of births and deaths.

Mekaṇḍa Deva is the chief exponent of the *Śaiva Siddhānta* philosophy. According to this system, Śiva is the Supreme Reality and that the *Jīva* or the individual soul is of the same essence as Śiva but not identical. *Pati* (God) *Paśu* (soul) and *Pāśa* (the bonds) and the thirty-six *Tattvas* or principles which constitute the world are all real.

The *Śaiva Siddhānta* is the distilled essence of *Vedānta.* The soul learns by long experience that this *Saṁsāra* is full of pains and is transitory. He develops *Vairāgya* (dispassion) and *Viveka* (discrimination) between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the impermanent. He attains eternal bliss and immortality only by attaining of *Śivatwa* or God-realisation.

To complete a definite mission, each one of the *Ācārya Puruṣas* incarnated himself on this earth to preach and propagate the doctrine which each considered necessary to keep the growth of various types of people who flourished at different periods of time. The different conception of *Brahman* are different approaches to the Reality. It is not possible for the final soul to get all at once a clear conception of the illimitable or infinite soul and more so to express it in adequate terms. The mind has to be mended or disciplined properly before it is rendered as a fit instrument to grasp the various tenets of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's *Adwaita Vedānta.*

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Scriptural study will inspire in you a greater zeal for God, if you read the stanzas slowly and try to assimilate their deep meaning. Reading sacred literature without following its precepts produces vanity, false satisfaction, and what I call "Intellectual Indigestion."

—*Paramahansa Yogananda*

"The less you read, the better. Read the *Gītā* and other good works on *Vedānta.* That is all you need. The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Control of the mind should be taught first. If I had my education to get over again and had any voice in the matter, I would learn to master my mind first, and then gather facts if I wanted them. It takes people a long time to learn things because they can't concentrate their minds at will."

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Bhakta Gāthā

Saints Who and How

—Shree Bhaisab

Saints are invaluable asset to human society. So the society must know 'who' and 'how' about the Saints. Our's is the era of fakes. In politics, business, administration, journalism, social service everywhere we see more of fakes than the reals. In the same way fakes are flourishing in the spiritual market. They wear the garbs and marks of saints merely with the purpose of laying their hands upon the honour, esteem and everything else offered to the saints in good faith by the society. All religions castigate such pseudos in one voice. The *New Testament* says—"Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." *Padma Purāṇa* says—"In *Kaliyuga* (i.e., the present era) those passing for saints and sages are generally out and out hypocrites."

So going after the garbs we may get befooled at the hands of the fakes. Lacking in insight, we may be depriving ourselves of the reals. Hence we need to see the signs of saints.

To Love and Live in God:

To love and live in God is the one unanimously accepted sign of a saint. A saint is one who loves and lives in God. But for this no one can be a saint. He knows his Master to be the utmost reality of the world so he lives with 'Him' mentally almost all of the time. *Īśa Upaniṣad* says—

ईशा वास्यमिदꣳ सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद् धनम्॥

A saint is the living image of this teaching. He lives with

'Him' only knowing pretty well that the Lord of his life is all pervading, omnipotent, omnipresent and immortal, except these everything seeming to be the real in the world is mortal and sure to fade. As he knows about the reality of God and universe so he is never the victim of worldly attachments and is free from all type of diversities. Good, bad, pleasure, pain, self importance, humiliation, success and failure. That is why he enjoys the state of ecstasy almost all the time. His heart is full of Lord's love. Many a time his eyes reflect the nectar of his heart. His intoxicated eyes have deep effect upon the pure hearts.

Free from Bondage:

So a saint is free from all type of bondages. As he has realised God and knows that everything in this world is a spark of the self-luminous Divine so he never aspires after the worldly things which cause bondage. Lost in love he never expects power and pelf, benefits, comforts and pleasures from persons, things and circumstances. He never demands any thing even from God. He may enjoy those pleasures thoughtlessly but never is the slave of them. He leads his disciples only towards God realisation; towards the lane of Lord's love. He is very much aware of the fact that in comparision with the bliss of Lord's love the total combined happiness of the world would not be equal to a drop of water in the ocean. So always diving deep in the nectar of Lord's love he distributes the same to the persons around him. At the sight of such a saint one enjoys some sort of heavenly bliss without knowing anything.

Love for His Creation:

Loving God results in loving His creation. A saint loves all living beings as they are all his Master's creation. So it is only natural that he sees and serves God in one and all. Saint Eknātha (1533-1599) and other pilgrims were taking Gaṅgā water to offer to the Lord in a temple. Midway in a desert they saw a donkey dying of thirst. The saint saw his Lord in the animal. He poured all the holy water into its mouth. The accompanying dry-hearted ones raised their eyebrows. The Saint said, "For what other purpose if not this, have you read holy books, don't they all tell you to see God in all beings? Water served to the dumb animal satisfies the Lord noway less than when offered to Him in temple. Commenting on this saint poet Moropant of Maharashtra said. This was as good as feeding a lakh of brahmins. There are so many examples of real saints serving the Master in this way.

Since saints love God it is only natural that they feel an affinity with His creation. It leads them to consideration for all and compassion for those in trouble or in need without having any mine and thine in their minds.

World—A Drama Directed by God:

Saints look upon this world as a drama directed by their loving Lord. In the world all play but their parts as assigned by the dear director. A hero and a villain both play equally important roles in a movie. So, saints look upon admirers and adversaries with the same eye—the eye full of love for both.

Hazrat Mohammad was the founder of Islam. A jewish lady lived next to his house. She felt jealous of his rising fame everyday. She threw the dust and dirt of her house before him. The saint simply swept it out saying, "Thank God for allowing us an opportunity to serve the neighbour." Once the opportunity didn't oblige, Mohammad felt concerned as to her welfare. On enquiry he learnt that she was ill and bed-ridden. He managed physician, medicines and fruit for her. He washed her clothes and cleaned her house for three days until she got well. On this favour the heart of the lady changed. History is full of examples like this, where the natural loving behaviour of the saints has changed the minds of wicked.

So the saints are like sandalwood and the wicked are like the axe. The axe cuts sandalwood but the sandalwood fills the axe with its fragrance.

Their Words and Deeds Go Together:

Their conduct speaks stronger than words. They are practical lessons in good and Godly life. They teach by their own example. They lay down ideals for others as they act upon them already in their daily life or when occasion arrives.

"Pray for them that prosecute you," said Christ. And he really prayed for them who persecuted him. M. Gāndhī before his assassination has said, "If somebody fired bullets at me and I didn't pardon him and remember God, it would mean that I was not a *Mahātmā,* I was a pretender," He came up true to his words.

A saint knows that love towards the Lord is the only way to lasting happiness. So he is always concerned and careful about the spiritual elevation of all those who come in contact with him.

Signed of Saints in Scriptures:

Marks of saints are vividly enshrined in holy books. The *Gītā* says: A saint is much the same in honour and insult, in villification and admiration, has no house of his own, is forgiving, is content with the present and steady in meditation. He is not afflicted by the world nor does he afflict the world; is free from fear, joy, anger and anxiety, has no expectations from anyone, has no grudges, is skilful and adept in everything; is indifferent and takes no initiative in worldly activities any more.

The *Bhāgawata* says: A saint is noble natured and soft spoken; does not preserve things for the morrow; does not seek or strive for anything. Banks only on God, pays respect to others and is at best in explaining the mysteries of God to others. He may not have bookish knowledge but is lost in loveful devotion and meditation.

All these virtues are the natural result of love for God. So love for lord is the leading mark of a saint. One must try to imbibe it at any cost. Real saints are the step-stones towards Godhead.

Sender—Prof. Nirmal Gupta

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Read and Digest

If you have money, serve God through it by giving it to the poor and other legitimate claimants according to their requirements. By doing so, you will attain good, both in this world and in the next. If you have no money, do not try to earn it by any sinful method.

* * *

Remember: Wealth, enjoyments of the world, *Karma* or the gods—none can do any good to one who has fallen into the jaws of Death. At that time, it is only the practice of *Bhajana* of God's Name that stands one in good stead.

* * *

Never associate with bad men whose only business is to indulge in sex-enjoyments and to earn money. As a blind following a blind falls into the ditch, even so he who follows the footsteps of worldly men suffers a fall.

* * *

Learning, austerities, renunciation, life in solitude and control of speech all go in vain in the case of one whose mind is overcome by lust.

* * *

Just as a strong boat is the greatest shelter to a drowning man, even so a true saint is the only shelter of souls drowning in the ocean of worldly existence.

* * *

A true saint is he, who attaches his mind to God without any motive, whose worldly urges are pacified, who is equal seeing, without any worldly attachments, without the sense of ego, who is free from the struggle between attraction and repulsion and is humble in spirit.

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Śrī Sarasvatī Hṛdayam

—*Smt. Vasanti Gopinath Jayaswal*

Vedic Thought:

Vedic concept of the divine is very unique. The modern *Bhāratīya's* concept of the Divine has its roots here. However we have modified and complicated it over many centuries to match the modifications of our mind and our changing ways of living. A few pointers are given below that can help.

The Ṛgvedic concept of the Divine was spontaneous. This matched their language of communication which was also spontaneous. These concepts are not the result of deliberate planning as seen in the later works. This planning is seen however in the other three *Vedas* that are later in their construction.

The *Ṛks* or stanzas of praise are conceptualizations of what the *Ṛṣis* spontaneously felt. The experience of Man, Nature and the Divine has to be reasoned by us. For them it was a matter of instinctive and instantaneous experience. We are at a stage where we give hands, feet, body, jewellery, clothes, wife, births, events etc., to appreciate and worship Viṣṇu. They did not need that. Viṣṇu, the pervasiveness Divine was a matter of experience to them. There was no room for dichotomous thinking. It is simply for that reason that modern man finds it hard to understand the *Ṛks* as we are approaching it with the magnifying glasses of a complicated mind. So many Western scholars and Indians inspired by the West have dubbed these *Ṛks* to just beautiful hymns or poetry. Sadly enough that is merely MERE-ing them!

Vedic Sanskrit and its manner of expression and usage of words is different from the *Itihāsic* and *Purāṇika* Sanskrit. Often a single word has different meanings that hold good together and separate, but the word always carries with it, its essence which remains the same no matter what is being said. Agni can be the Divinity that is First, it can be the sacrificial fire, it can be the first Eagerness within, yet throughout the essence of the word Agni the igniting factor remains the same. *Go* means cow, rays and light. *Aśva* means horse, power and speed. *Vāja* means food, nourishment and source. *Ṛtam* means water. It can also mean manifested Truth. It is used to say cosmic order and order in living style. *Sāgara* means ocean, and the raw material for the building of creation. These are just a few of the many examples.

Gender and Number made no difference when words to suggest the Divine were used. Thus Sarasvatī can be the single source or the many streams, the neuter river, the feminine mother, the masculine *Sarasvantaḥ*, the result, or *Sarasvantam*, the phenomenon of movement or flow.

The *Ṛks* being *Ṛṣi*-conceptualisations. Their creators were not mere poets. Their understanding went beyond normal understanding. They are *Krānta darśīs*. Most important of all they are *Satya Śrutāḥ*. They could hear the revealed truth. These truths are already there in the *Vyoma* before and will continue to be after them. It is as if they went into the inner space or *Daharākāśa* and caught what is in outer space or *Mahākāśa* and expressed these truths in outpourings sublime and divine through the medium of speech. What resulted was these *Ṛks* that have an automatic parallel value. One that is an outer value *Bāhya* and one that is *Guhya* or inner. That is why they became *Mantras.* This double value is instantaneous. It can therefore be used to attain what we desire and ward off what we do not want. Its measurement in the outer life can be seen by ordinary man. Its measurement in inner life is known only to the *Ṛṣi* and falls within the dominion of the "Unmentionables". To translate these *Ṛks* word to word would be an act of inadequacy. Paraphrasing them would therefore allow better comprehension.

The Mother:

Om is the affirmative and the Assent ॐ.

The first source of nourishment for the human is the mother's breast. Here one finds pacification not only for the pains of hunger but also for the agonies that life outside the womb brings. This is the first morphological part of the mother that means everything to the infant.

The hungry infant lies near and waits. The breast is quiet, and full. When these two conditions come together the apex of the lower triangle of man moves towards the apex of the inverted triangle of the divine. When man makes the effort the breast begins the release of its contents.

The river with its body of water is the life line of an agrarian community where civilisations thrived on its banks. What instinct drove man to its edges! It is not enough if he went to dip in it. He had to exert himself to be able to sue it for his manifold needs यस्ते स्तनः शशयो यो मयोभूर्.

The skinny infant after a few days of feeding begins to fill out. The giving mother plumps the young. The crying child knows what is best for it. The good and wise know where to go to get the right nourishment. Those that live far away from the river do not do as well. Her streams are there to nourish all, the man, the beast and the tree येन विश्वा पुष्यसि वार्याणि.

A pyramid of human needs were satisfied by the life giving waters. Man purified himself and his surroundings with it. He quenched his thirst. He sustained on it for growth. The good know the precious value of the river's water. They know of the many treasures and possibilities that the river—mother yields. She is a giver of fine gifts, that mother! यो रत्नधा वसुवित् यः सुदत्रः.

Sarasvatī uncovers her breasts bare for our nourishment.

In her is the wealth we are looking for. May we all become fine people to deserve the gifts that she can yield. The hungry child knows only of his all consuming hunger. The child's need is Here and Now. His is the cry that stimulates the flow. Cry we shall for Knowledge Divine! His is the touch that sends the flow. Touch we shall with our heart and our soul! सरस्वती तम् इह धातवे कः ॥

यस्ते स्तनः शशयो यो मयोर्भूयेन विश्वा पुष्यसि वार्याणि।
यो रत्नधः वसुविद्यः सुदत्रः सरस्वति तमिह धातवे कः॥
(*Ṛk.* I. 164.49)

Whose brest for the infant is full of nourishment. By whose waters all are nourished, which is full of gems, wealth and good gifts. Sarasvatī give those now to those who wish to intake.

Sarasvatī is the mother of mothers, the river of rivers, the illuminator of illuminators divine. *Ambitamā* is motherhood just as *Naditamā* is the condition of being a river as also is *Devitamā,* the condition of divinity. Sarasvatī is therefore motherly, riverly and divine. She is the state of plenty, the state of refuge, and the state of giving endlessly. She is the non-stagnant state that constantly flows, moving towards her destination or goal. All along she continues to be the provider. She is the illuminator from whom many a lesson in life can be learned by one who truly feels like a child full of respect and knows his place in this lineage continuum. Her shine lights up what we need to see अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति.

Man is in no way worthy of being matched to the great river. The river is greater than us. Man is certainly not greater than the river. Sarasvatī is praised and remembered by the relatively unknown.

We too would like to be like that which we admire. With the help of the river we can become reputable, worthy of mention that is. Sarasvatī, the Mother can teach us how to become reputable!

We think that the only way to learn is from books, people etc. Nature is one of the greatest teachers if only we take time to observe! अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसि प्रशस्तिमम्ब नस्कृधि .

अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति।
अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसि प्रशस्तिमम्ब नस्कृधि॥

(*Ṛk.* II. 41.16)

Motherliest of the mothers, Riverliest of the Rivers, Shiniest of the Shining ones, Sarasvatī. It is as if the non-worthy are praising you. Make man praiseworthy, Mother.

Her Awesome Strength:

Sarasvatī with intensity of strength tears apart the peak of the mountain with its currents just as the bird, eater of the lotus stalk, intensely tears apart the fibres of the stalk.

इयं शुष्मेभिः बिसखा इव आरुजत् सानुगिरीणां तविषेभिः ऊर्मिभिः।

The mountains' rise from the earth's surface took several years of slow but steady progress before it rose so high above. This is so even if volcanic activity was the triggering event. So too man has come to be man over many many experiences and many births. From being a simple physical man he is now an elevated or knowledgeable man.

The hard substance of the mountain is torn apart by the gushing of water, a substance that looks flimsier than the rocky matrix of the mountain. It is the adamantine nature of water that allows for this tearing apart. How eager is She, who is one full of the waters, to flow! She rises up to the lofty mountains and then flows down, with her many currents.

The divine here does not caress. It tears apart the risen man as it flows through Him. Tears to the very matrix of his being. A being who has built himself high, a sum total of reflexes, instincts, tendencies, emotions, notions, beliefs and judgements. It tears through everything that he has built up over the years. It shakes his very foundation with its varied currents, before it flows!

Ah! Sarasvatī, we appeal to you who come from the distant far. You come like a guide from Beyond. You are the only one who can take us to the Distant. We appeal to you for protection with these beautiful praises. We serve you by exerting our supportive intellectual faculty. पारावतघ्नीम् अवसे सुवृक्तिभि: सरस्वति इमा विवासे इम धीतिभि:.

It is very obvious that we feel distanced by the source of the Divine, which seems so far away. To get there we feel we too have to go very far. The River Guide comes to guide us to this distant place. To get directions from Her we appeal with beautiful praises. To understand Her instructions we need to exercise our intellect.

Safety is felt when lost in a terrain on noticing a river one follows its course. As we observe her course we are awestruck by the power she wields with which she tears the formidable mountains as she makes her way. The river is indeed mighty, powerful and scary yet there is a sense of instinctive faith that we seem to have in Her. We feel that there is a sense of direction in Her. A direction that we seek from one whose strength is awesome.

इयं शुष्मेभिर्बिसखा इवारुजत् सानु गिरीणां तविषेभिरूर्मिभि:।
पारावतघ्नीमवसे सुवृक्तिभि: सरस्वतीमा विवासेम धीतिभि:॥

(*Ṛk.* VI. 61.2)

"These currents whose strength tears apart the peak of the mountain just as the bird, eater of the lotus stalk, tears apart (the stalk). We appeal for protection with these beautiful verses to Sarasvatī who has come from beyond. We shall serve by exertion of our intellect."

Having witnessed Her strength man makes his contact with her with utmost respect. As she flows the request made is, "Please do not agitate our dwellings with your waters, do not smack (us) with (your) flow! The power of the Divine can agitate. It can unsettle us. The house we stay cosily within is not just physical it is also mental. The Divine Might can easily shake that, meaning, it can lead to many an unsetting situation, thought, experience etc. It is only human nature to want to be comfortable. No one ever likes an agitated mind. We would like to be carried by the flow of the River rather than be smacked by it.

This line indicates an awareness of both human frailty and the need for comfort on one hand and the sense of the might of the River on the other. सरस्वति अभि नो नेषि वस्यो मा आप स्फरीः पयसा मा न आ धक्. An appeal is made to the River saying: "Rejoice (instead) in our friendly solicitations "We are taking an attitude of a friend to the River जुषस्व नः सख्या वेश्या.

Man is convinced of the value of living by the River and benefiting from its providence. He does not wish to settle in any place far away from it, to the degree of never finding himself in a situation where he lands in an area abandoned by the River. This is an expression that clearly indicates that there are areas in man's experience where he knows that there will be no growth. It is like an abandoned dry bed. It is a wasteland. In order to be able to find the fertile land and dwell there in Her Providence we need Her Grace. To keep us away from stepping into situations and surroundings that are non-conducive for our growth we need Her Grace च मा त्वत् क्षेत्राणि अरणानि गन्म.

To stay by Her side and not be agitated thereby benefiting from a steady growth, we need Her Grace.

सरस्वत्यभि नो नेषि वस्यो माप स्फरीः पयसा मा न आ धक् ।
जुषस्व नः सख्या वेश्या च मा त्वत्क्षेत्राण्यरणानि गन्म ॥
(*Ṛk.* VI. 61.14)

Sarasvatī, coming towards, do not agitate (our) dwellings with (your) waters. Do not smack with (your) flow. Rejoice in (our) friendly solicitation and may we not enter fields abandoned by you.

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Appalling Lack of Respect for our own Culture

A race which develops a feeling of contempt, disregard, censoriousness and aversion for its own culture, forefathers, customs and ideology, attire and jewellery, diet and innocent traditional ways and to which everything foreign begins to appear as excellent, noble, praiseworthy and worth adopting does not survive. Foreign invaders of superior might from outside can conquer our land but cannot conquer our individuality and culture. But when we start undermining the very foundations of our culture ourselves—when we begin to take pride in giving up our identity, we not only get vanquished but meet our very death. And it is a matter for deep regret that in this holy land of selfdenying sages and seers chastened by austerities and rich in knowledge of God both in His Absolute and qualified aspects, all this is happening indiscriminately. In our customs and ideology, our educational institutions, our religious centres, the mode of conduct of our men and women, our language, our attire and ornaments, our diet, our dwellings and houses, our kitchens and bath-rooms, on occasions of our meeting one another, in our mode of writing letters, our talks, our procedure of action,—in all these disregard and contempt for everything Indian and a tendency to imitate blindly that which is foreign are growing like wild fire and threaten to shake our very foundations. Indian Culture is based on Truth and Truth never dies. Hence even though this culture will not die, will never get uprooted, this destructive tendency as a result of which its exalted position is being lowered at our own hands is surely a stigma on us.

Giving up their motherhood and chastity, women are becoming a mere instrument of sense-gratification. Men are becoming highly sensual, fond of luxury and worshippers of mammon. Forgetting the ideals of Dhruva, Prahlāda and Yudhiṣṭhira, our boys prefer to live and move in an English or American style and dress and even in our homes infants have begun to address their parents as 'papa', 'daddy' and 'mummy' instead of using Indian equivalents. Our dress has latterly become so anglicized that even foreigners express wonder and regret to see it. The other day the Marāṭhī periodical 'Sanatani' reproduced in its columns what an American professor of the Hislop College at Nagpur wrote in the current year's magazine of the same college commenting on the growing disrespect of Indians towards their own attire. He says—

"The visitor seeks to adapt himself to local conditions, but he first discovers that local conditions are determined to adapt themselves to him. It seems, in a word, as if Indians have decided to stop looking like Indians and start looking like Westerners.

"Lacking the enthusiasm created by a revolutionary situation and impelled by convenience and an unconscious feeling of inferiority, Indians have abandoned their traditional national dress and jumped Dhotīless into makeshift western trousers.

"The sympathetic visitor can only view the change with regret and wonder how many other vestiges of Indian culture will eventually be sacrificed."

The foregoing are the words of a foreigner who is full of sympathy for India. Really speaking we have developed a disrespect and contempt for our own self and we feel ashamed in acknowledging our own things in every sphere. That is why we have begun to feel ashamed in calling ourselves Hindus, moving out in *Dhotī* and *Kurtā,* calling ourselves religious, and professing devotion to our parents and devotion to purity of conduct. This is a very deplorable state of affairs. The *Varṇāśrama* system promulgated by our sages and seers saved our identity, but today a great disrespect is growing towards all that is Indian. The thinkers of India should deeply ponder over this.

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Real security—and all religions teach this—can be ours only when we become established firmly in God. Everything in this material universe is subject to change; nothing remains the same under the heavens. It is unreasonable to hope that we can build a secure foundation on loose sand. As Lord Kṛṣṇa taught thousands of years ago; "Arjuna, become anchored in that which is changeless." In this world of change God alone is the only constancy. Therefore it follows that if man is going to be a reasonably healthy, sound individual—physically and mentally—he must begin to include God in his daily life; he must not shut out the very source of his life, the very source of his security. Isn't that logical?

—Self-Realization

Retire regularly to lonely and secluded place everyday and try to banish all thoughts of the world from the mind for the time being. When the world is thus forgotten even for the time being, the conscious Self, or the *Ātmā* alone will remain Meditate on this self. Such meditation will bring *Samādhi* (absorption), and *Samādhi* will bring emancipation.

—Jayadayal Goyandka

Let no one deceive another, let no one despise another, let no one out of anger or resentment wish to harm another.

—Buddha

Story

Who is Bound

'बद्धो हि को यो विषयानुरागी'।

"Who is bound? He who runs after sense-pleasures."

A monk alone with a loin-cloth on the body and a pumpkin water pot in his hand. Fair complexion, a dominating forehead, neither young nor old. The matted locks were not artificial. They got naturally matted without any intention to make them. Quite black and grey were the hairs quite ravelled and uncombed.

The feet full of dust and fatigue of journey on the face. The beard also not free from dust particles, the big sweat drops on the forehead. It is about midday and the mendicant also requires some rest.

"Lo! what is this? Why are these people running this way in a hubub? Why so much hurry and worry." A monk is never justified to poke his nose in others' affairs but even then his tender heart always melts when he finds people in a crisis or calamity. The entire village was on the run. Human beings alongwith their live stock and transportable belongings were deserting the village and fleeing from there to some place of security. What else should be the reason if not a fearful calamity?

The monk took a little rest on the platform built under the thick shadow of banian tree near the village. No body came to him. It is a big village and looks prosperous too. The village head had a grand and lofty building, it was quite apparent but decidedly there is something wrong. Everybody seems to be in a hurry to vacate the village. They have loaded their entire household on the bullok carts and left only empty houses behind.

"What is matter gentleman, you all seem to be completely perplexed" asked the monk, one of the villagers.

"Excuse me sir" he replied with humility and reverence after touching the feet of the monk—"We are in such a crisis that we cannot render any service to you."

"What is the crisis after all? Just tell me if it is alright to let me know."

"Piṇḍārās are coming. Bhīmapāla, the most notorious of the Piṇḍārās is coming this way with his entire full battalion. He has several hundreds of horse riders. He is a demon Sir. It is better if you also leave this place and go to a secured place. They have no consideration for monk or no monk; for feeble or strong; child or old; male or female. They are satisfied not with their loots but they will set on the fire the entire village and kill as many persons as it pleases them. It is their pastime and enjoyment to torture their victims."

"Those who solely depend on Viśwanātha, do not require any mercy or generosity at the hands of any human being." The monk raised his eyes towards the sky and said—"The fear itself is terrified before a devotee of Mṛtyuñjaya when he remembers him sincerely. But for the time being I want to see your head. Can't you help me in this respect?"

Will you meet the head? The villager was a little startled. He at once got busy thinking—"It is not at all impossible for a Piṇḍārā to change his guise. Is this monk one of them?"

"It is a sin to suspect a monk," said the monk. "After all when a servant of Śaṅkara is chanced to come here, he cannot go from here leaving you high and dry. It will be a great insult to his Lord. Who knows that the lord is not inclined to shower His mercy this time on Bhīmapāla itself? Well, I have got to do something for you, haven't I?"

"Very well sir, follow me" the sense of reverence got an upper hand to the suspicion.

* * *

"Are you sure that Piṇḍārās are coming?" The monk did not allow the *Sardāra* to do unnecessary talking.

"Three days before a youngman of our group was caught when Bhīmapāla attacked the other village. He somehow managed to escape from there. They destroyed that village and there are only ruins and some rings of smoke. God knows, how many people were killed. The village leader reported at a single stretch.

"Will you not protect those who depend upon you." It was a simple question and not a taunt.

"That is exactly what I am trying to do" the tone of the *Sardāra* was weary. "I am *Kṣatriya* by caste, not at all afraid of death. But I am afraid I cannot save the village and the villagers even if I alongwith my brave soldiers sacrifice our life as a fistful of us can do nothing before the huge number of dreadful Piṇḍārās. And so we are vacating the village."

"Will you manage to avoid them?"

"Very little hope sir." Their horses are accustomed of forest life. There is no wild track which they are not aware of." There was a tragic disappointment in his tone. "When they find the village empty they will be furious. The habitations are at a considerable distance in this locality. They and their horses will be hungry and tired. They will require immediate service. They will not get it unless they reach another village which is not possible unless they undertake another long journey. So they will make a thorough combing of the locality. But there is no other way. They will arrive here by the morning. Till then whatever distance we may cover."

"No need to go so far." The monk consoled them. "I will not stop you. If you stay the Lord will protect you all here itself. If you cannot rely, go but not very far. Be within easy reach so that you may easily come back and manage your household when the Piṇḍārās vacate the village."

"You do not know their nature sir." There was a great deal of pain in the tone of the village leader. "They will not leave any house in the condition to be managed again."

"I, very well know the nature of my Lord. It is not in his nature to avoid those who exclusively depend upon Him." In the voice of the monk there was a strange and unshaken faith. "You will get your houses quite intact tomorrow afternoon."

"Please do not insist to stay here sir. I cannot permit a venerable guest to be a victim of the hungry wolves. Being a *Kṣatriya* I should sacrifice my life in the stead."

The monk interrupted. "There is no enemy of mine. There is no body in the vast creation of my Lord who is not my friend. Where a monk should live or not—you have no right to decide."

"I am your obedient servant sir but...."

"Then simply obey my command" the monk instructed. "Go, all of you from here but not because you are unsafe. It is simply because that you might have some consolation. Come back after the midday. Only that much distance is enough." The monk did not agree to take any food or drink. He went back to the banian tree.

* * *

"We have covered the entire village. There is no living being. The entire village is deserted. The doors are open. Not even a broken cot." There was a terrible awe in the voice of the soldiers while submitting the report to Bhīmapāla, their leader.

"Shut up". Bhīmapāla was still on the back of his black horse. He roared—the horses require fodder. The soldiers must have some food and rest. The deserted houses! Are we bats you think? Find those absconders at once. Burning the village and warming ourselves is secondary. Scatter yourself at once, Pronto."

"Only one man sir, in a loin-cloth underneath the banian tree. His eyes closed." Reported a soldier.

"Get him here tightly roped." Horses galloped instantly.

"Where have the villagers gone?" Bhīmapāla asked the monk but he was surprised to see that the roped monk was not at all afraid. On the contrary he was happy and what was more he was making no protest at all.

"The liberated souls do not keep any account of their prisoners and they are not bound to make any reply to the questions from a prisoner." The monk replied in a soft but very firm tone.

"Prisoner, who?" Bhīmapāla got still more surprised.

"Those who were compelled to flee. Those who came running on the backs of horses. Those who run here and there dancing bound by their lustful desires."

"And what about him who is standing before me tightly bound?" Bhīmapāla burst into laughter.

"These ropes tie only the earthen toy." The monk laughed. They are helpless to tie, the servant of Viśwanātha. It is beyond your power to rope me. You yourself cannot cut your bondage without my help, I, who am a petty slave of the Lord.

"Am I tied?" Shouted the brigand. I cannot indulge in your incoherent talks. You will have to disclose whereabouts of these absconders."

"It is not possible without the grace of my lord for you to see your bondage." The monk did not pay any attention towards the two soldiers ready for flogging. He raised his eyes upward and said "Āśutoṣa (easily propitiable)!" Some invisible causation and Bhīmapāla dismounted from the horse, fell down at the feet of the monk and cried "Pardon me sir, and save me. The terrible snakes expanding their hoods gazing with their venomous eyes. Protect me from them."

No body could see and understand what was happening. The Piṇḍārās only thought that the monk was not any ordinary person. He must have done some miracle.

They are tightening their coils, these fearful serpents. My bones are almost broken and the body is burning with their poison. Bhīmapāla started tossing his body, moaning, screaming and imploring the monk. "Be kind and protect me."

"Today it is not for the first time that these snakes are holding you tightly. You have always been in their hold. These snakes of different colours are your emotions—lust, anger and greed etc.

You have always been burning. With the grace of the Lord today you have realised that you have been tied for a pretty long time."

"Of course only today I have seen what I must have long back. You have been most graceful to me to provide this divine vision. I am so indebted to you."

* * *

During after noon the villagers came back but they did not find there either the monk or the brigands. The Piṇḍārā terror ended for ever.

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One should not hurt others even by words. One must not speak even an unpleasant truth unnecessarily. By indulging in rude words, one's nature becomes coarse. One's sensibility is lost if one has not control over one's speech.

—*Sarada Devi*

येषां गुणेष्वसंतोषो रागो येषां श्रुतं प्रति।
सत्यव्यसनिनो ये च ते नराः पशवोऽपरे॥

"Only those deserve to be called human beings who feel the sense of repulsion towards the three *Guṇas (Prakṛti)* and a sense of attraction for the *Vedas* and who are devoted to the truth; all others are beasts."

—*Yogavāsiṣṭha*

Value of Occult Power

Spiritualism is often designated as a science and as a science we may respect it, but it must not be confounded with that which brings the Real Joy, the Perfect Bliss that which places you above all temptations.

We know of a man in India who was apparently dead for six months. This process of suspending life-functions is called *Khecarī Mudrā* and is given in full detail in the works on *Haṭha Yoga.* He put himself in that state. There was no sign of life, no blood flowed through his veins. After six months he came to life again. Here was a man who might be considered a wonder of wonders, another Christ. He came to life after having been apparently dead for six months, not three days only. But this man was far from being happy or free. Rāma need not mention the crimes he committed. The prince in whose court he practised these things drove him out of the state.

There was another man who walked on the waters. A real saint laughed and asked him how long it took him to acquire this power. He replied that it took him seventeen years. The saint replied, "In seventeen years you have acquired a power worth two cents." (We give two cents to a boatman and he ferries us across the river).

All personal power is limited, it binds you just as much as any possession or property binds you. Chains are chains. whether of iron or gold; they enslave you all the same.

If these powers make a man so very holy, then dogs must be holy. Dogs smell out where the stag is. The dog has the power of smell that man has not; hence they must be holy.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

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Duties of a Householder

संविभागो हि भूतानां सर्वेषामेव दृश्यते।
तथैवापचमानेभ्यः प्रदेयं गृहमेधिना॥
तृणानि भूमिरुदकं वाक् चतुर्थी च सूनृता।
सतामेतानि गेहेषु नोच्छिद्यन्ते कदाचन॥
देयमार्तस्य शयनं स्थितश्रान्तस्य चासनम्।
तृषितस्य च पानीयं क्षुधितस्य च भोजनम्॥
चक्षुर्दद्यान्मनो दद्याद् वाचं दद्यात् सुभाषिताम्।
उत्थाय चासनं दद्यादेष धर्मः सनातनः।
प्रत्युत्थायाभिगमनं कुर्यान्न्यायेन चार्चनम्॥

(*Mahābhārata, Vanaparva* II. 53—56)

It is enjoined (in the scriptures) that a householder should distribute a portion of his food to all living beings. Cooked food should likewise be provided by him to those who do not cook for themselves (such as *Saṁnyāsīs*). A mat of straw or even bare ground (to sit on), water (to drink and wash one's hands and feet with) and fourthly a sweet tongue (to greet one with) are never lacking in the house of good ones. An ailing man should be offered a bed, a fatigued person standing at one's door should be given a seat, a thirsty person should be served with water and a hungry man with food. One should greet a visitor with a loving look paying attention and sweet words and, standing up to receive him, should offer a seat. Such is the eternal duty of a householder. Nay, one should get up and go to meet him from a distance and should offer him worship according to the rules of propriety.